Early in 1914 I received orders to go to Kelantan on transfer from Jugra Hill, a place not without melancholy charm, but notoriously unhealthy. I was the fifth District Officer there in a year, and escaped the prevailing malaria for nine months, but was laid up with it when my successor arrived (the late “Inky” Bain, who stayed there for four years!)

First impressions of the scenery of the Kelantan plain were delightful. I enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. & Mrs. Langham-Carter at the Residency before moving into a small bungalow (since demolished) built on the site of an old execution ground and reputedly haunted. No ghost appeared in my time, but weird loud noises in the roof often had to be silenced by bang-

Sultan Mohamed IV of Kelantan 1902 – 1920
outside the Balai Besar, Kota Bharu.

The reigning Sultan was Mohamed IV, the most noteworthy Ruler since Mulut Merah. He was a kindly hospitable man. His sons the Raja Kelantan and the Tengku Seri Indra (H.H. the present Sultan), who succeeded him in turn, were friendly and turned up regularly at the weekly tennis parties at the Residency. The club was cheerful and a pleasant change from the loneliness of Jugra Hill. Altogether life at Kota Bharu was enjoyable, but work as Magistrate in the Central Court was monotonous and prevented one from seeing more of the country. So it was a relief in April 1915, to be sent out to Pasir Puteh as a sort of Political Officer to the Malay State Guides, who had by then replaced the detachment of the Shropshire Light Infantry which under Colonel Brownlow had been sent up to Kelantan after the outbreak of the To Jangguat Rising.

This affair was said to have been instigated by Ungku Besar whose ancestors traditionally had once held sway over that part of the State bordering Trengganu. But the eponymous leader of the Rising was a bearded man of Arab extraction, who led a band of malcontents from Jeram down to the Pangkalan, raided the Police Station, killed the Sergeant and seized the carbines. They then proceeded to hack about the District Office and burn the records. The Police fled and the District Officer, Abdul Latif had prudently left for Kota Bharu taking the cash from the safe with him to be handed over to the Treasury there. Abdul Latif was a capable, honest and hardworking official, but unpopular
with the raiat because he was not a son of the soil but an orang luar (often an object of some suspicion in Kelantan). There was too some dissatisfaction owing to rumours of intended land reforms (which were enthusiastically welcomed later when fully understood).

I joined the Malay States Guides Officers (Major Horton, Captain Blanford and Major F. E. Wood the Medical Officer) in the small dispensary which had just been erected. Horton was killed at Aden and Blanford is also dead, but Wood (who later acted as P.M.O., F.M.S.) is still alive at Bettws-y-Coed in North Wales. The D.O.'s quarters housed the Sikh Officers and men of the Guides.

Two days after my arrival, we were unexpectedly joined by Langham Carter and (Sir) George Maxwell then S.H.C.* who had walked over from Gunong to have a look for themselves. That night our Dispensary Headquarters was fired upon without damage except to the attap roof. At dawn we started (together with Gilbert Jackson, Chief Inspector of Police) in single file up a path towards Kampung Jeram. Our leading files had barely emerged on to the padi field when shots were fired at them from the screen of a high hedge in front of the Kampong some 150 yards off. We all raced into the open (one at least of the party not without some trepidation) and started popping off our carbines. The shots from the "enemy" stronghold, though numerous, were fortunately aimed too high, and our only casualty was a Sikh with a graze on his leg. The "Engagement" only lasted about 15 minutes and when all was quiet again we went over to see what was behind the hedge and found about seven dead bodies includ-

ing that of To Janggut (who suffered from elephantiasis) lying appropriately enough beside an elephant gun. His body was carried to Kota Bharu (for he was reported to be invulnerable, and people in the capital would not have believed a mere report of his death).

About seven of the leading rebels were proclaimed and given a week to surrender, after which we knocked down their houses by the simple expedient of cutting a coconut tree to topple down on to them. Only one did surrender, Penghulu Adam, who at the succeeding trial was sentenced to life imprisonment. But not much later, he was pardoned by the Sultan and thereafter lived at Bukit Jawa, a decent enough fellow and intelligent. Others who were serving long sentences in Singapore gaol were recalled and similarly pardoned by H.H.

In preparing the evidence for these trials by the High Court, Langham-Carter was most active. He and I tried to sift the often conflicting testimony of many witnesses. It was a pleasure to work with him, for he had a great sense of humour, but he was quite tireless whether at work or out snipe shooting. He was criticised for having called for assistance from Singapore to suppress the Rising — unfairly in my opinion. Pasir Puteh then was very much out of the world, a name only to almost all Europeans. In some of the kampons no European had been seen until I turned up. Communication with the capital there was none except on foot. The Police force in Kota Bharu was insufficient to be able to spare a detachment to cope with the rising, if even a quarter of the blood curdling reports which reached the British Adviser had been true.

Thus ended the To Janggut Rising. It added a date by which the Kelantan raiat could fix his memory of past

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* Secretary to the High Commissioner in Singapore.
days. Previously the crucial date had been the Great Wind of 1881. By comparison with what was going on in Europe, it was a storm in a teacup, or barely that. But naturally in Kelantan it was a noteworthy affair. Not that we had been living uninfluenced by the news of the War. At its outbreak, the Kelantan Volunteer Rifles and the Kelantan State Volunteer Rifles had been formed under Captain Anderson the Commissioner of Police, in Kota Bharu and in the Ulu, and later I raised a platoon in Pasir Puteh. It all helped to make up for disappointment at being refused permission to go home and join up.

When things had quietened down at Pasir Puteh, and the Malay States Guides and their successors the Penang Malay Volunteers had departed, I stayed on as District Officer, and was happy to have a worth while job in trying to restore confidence and to get people back to normal life at their homes and restart padi planting, for many had fled when the Rising began. The road linking the District to the capital was not yet built and to get there meant a walk to Gunong to the nearest road. I started a road which was intended to link up Pasir Puteh with Kampung Machang on the Trunk Road, which was later completed by R.G.B. Farrer (no relation of R.J.) and commemorates his name. He also converted a bridle-path built in my time from Pasir Puteh to Cherang Roko into a road. His early death, caused by a firework accident, deprived the Malayan Civil Service of one of its finest young officers.

There was also plenty to do in getting going the new Land System inaugurated by Langham-Carter and carried into effect by his successor, R. J. Farrer. Once understood by the raiat, it was immensely popular. Formerly no land rent had been paid on small holdings; instead there was a produce tax and poll tax was paid by each adult male. Both were disliked, for they gave ample opportunity for dishonesty on the part of the collectors, and the produce tax put an unfair penalty on the industrious agriculturist. Under the new system both were abolished and the cultivated land was surveyed by Plane Table (finance forbade more), settled, and subject to a land rent so small that in fact each landowner paid less annually than before to the Government. Once people realised that the new system did not mean yet another burden (as it had been falsely represented) they were delighted.

For its success, all credit is due to R. J. Farrer. He had come to Kelantan as Captain of the Volunteers, but stayed on as British Adviser. Before his arrival, we wondered what he would be like: A “Straits Cadet” educated at Eton and Balliol somehow sounded rather starchy. How different from the reality! Farrer won the affection and respect of all Malays in Kelantan from the Sultan downwards, and his name will long be remembered. His time and patience were much taken up with the protracted negotiations with the Duff Development Company.

His successors H. W. Thomson and A. F. Worthington were both men in the right place as Advisers. Worthington’s long F.M.S. experience of Land and District work stood him in good stead. Thomson was no stranger to Kelantan, for he had been there before as Assistant to W. A. Graham, the last Adviser under the Siamese Regime which only ceased with the Treaty of 1909, when British Sovereignty started and J. S. Mason was made the first British Adviser.

Other noteworthy names of this time were Captain Anderson, Commissioner of Police, Dr. Gimlette, Archie Montgomery, and above all Doctor W. J. Geale. What a grand fellow he was, and what magnificent work he did,
whether in the Ulu or as acting Residency Surgeon. As Farrer has recorded “the effect of his personality, energy, enthusiasm, geniality and clarity of direction was immediate and striking. During internment in Singapore in 1942–45 most of the past dwellers in Kelantan would gravitate to the old men’s Hut and sit at his feet”.

Space prevents mention of all the Malay friends I made in Kelantan, but Tengku Besar Tuan Soh cannot be omitted. I am happy to retain to this day the friendship of Tengku Abdul Majid (Tengku Seri Paduka Raja). *Hilang dimata di hati jangan.*

The Siamese word “Kweng” for a Mukim survived until superseded by “Daerah”, and Penghulus were called “To’ Kweng” until their designation was changed to “To’ Penggawa”. (The word “Penghulu” oddly enough was not a term of respect but was applied to *Lawyer Burek*). The Penggawas of Pasir Puteh were a good lot, especially Tuan Muda Jeram, a mine of information about the old days.

The population of the State was 90% Malay and there was no Chinese of high standing except the hereditary holder of the office of Juru Bahasa (a sinecure). At that time it was held by a pleasant youngster, good at football. But Tawkay Beng Seng is probably still remembered—a fat genial man, owner of the only shop of any note in Kota Bharu. He was remarkably well informed and spoke both Malay and English fluently, mixing up the two languages in his talk. “*Bukan sahaya punya responsibility*” was one of his gems. He must have made plenty of money, but some years later his shop was destroyed by fire.

Kota Bharu market was a colourful spectacle. Women walked long distances to it to sell their wares for very small profit. The ‘pitis’ (tin coins with a hole through the middle so that they could be tied together) of which five went to a cent, were a boon to a poor agricultural community. Football was popular everywhere; bull fights at Gunong attracted large crowds and cock fighting (without artificial spurs, which were illegal) had many devotees. Gambling of one sort or another was almost universal. Chap Jiki became an objectionable craze and difficult to suppress.

Cattle stealing was the charge in 75% of the Court cases. There was any amount of it (though checked by the institution of branding), but it was also the usual complaint to bring against a man whom one had reason to dislike, and about half the charges proved to be false.

Village *Heads* were called Nebengs (Nai-Ban). The post carried no emolument except for some small tax exemption, but the position carried some kudos.

Wayang Kulit and Mayong were popular evening entertainments, and a Mayong at any Kampong at which rent collecting was going on brought in crowds and increased the takings.

I know little or nothing of the Ulu, never having gone upriver except to hold Court at Pasir Mas or to Volunteer Camps at Tanah Merah, and on one occasion to Kuala Krai for about three weeks when T. S. Adams (now Sir Theodore) was ill. Towards the end of my time I used to bicycle twice a month along the beach from Semerak to Bachok to hold Court, and shortage of staff necessitated my appointment as Superintendent of Lands in Kota Bharu in addition to District Officer, Pasir Puteh—an unsatisfactory arrangement.

After being out seven years I got leave and regretfully sailed away from Kelantan in August 1920: The memory of that State and of its people lives long in the minds of all who have been lucky enough to serve there.